

Reclamation Manual

Directives and Standards

Subject: New Employee Orientation Program

Purpose: Facilitates a sense of direction, purpose, and commitment for new Reclamation employees.

Authority: Code of Federal Regulations (5 CFR 410); U.S. Code Title 5, Chapter 41; and Department of the Interior (DOI) Personnel Bulletin No. 2000-1 (410).

Contact: Reclamation Program Group, D-4200

1. **Purpose.** Effective March 1, 2000, all Reclamation regional offices, the Reclamation Service Center (RSC), and the Washington Office (WO) are required to provide a comprehensive employee orientation and acculturation training program for new employees. The orientation training will be completed within 1 year of appointment and ensure that all requirements of the Department of the Interior's personnel bulletin referenced above are met. Depending on the number of new employees, the training should be scheduled at least once a year to meet the minimum requirement.
 - A. This orientation training will provide the employee:
 - a welcome and orientation to the organization
 - an education about Reclamation, the Department, and the Federal Government
 - an overview of employee programs and benefits
 - B. The orientation program will assist the organization by advancing Reclamation's organizational effectiveness (Mission Goal 3 of Reclamation's Strategic Plan). It will accomplish this by:
 - developing and facilitating retention of a skilled, innovative, and diverse workforce
 - enhancing customer service and strengthening business practices
2. **Scope.** This policy applies to all new permanent Reclamation employees. Other Reclamation employees may also participate in orientation activities as time and resources allow.
3. **Responsibilities.** The organization's leadership has the responsibility of supporting the new employee orientation process, communicating clear information about their

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organizations, and holding supervisors and managers accountable for orienting new employees.

- A. **Supervisors and Managers.** The success of the orientation process depends on the support and participation of supervisors and managers. New employees must be provided sufficient time for participation in and completion of orientation activities and programs. Supervisors and managers should assign a sponsor, complete checklists, and provide feedback on how well the orientation program prepares their employees for their new job.
- B. **Sponsors.** The purpose of the sponsor is to welcome new employees into the organization and help them transition into the new office environment. Sponsors will be selected by their supervisors because they have good judgment and can communicate with new employees in a positive manner. Sponsors will serve as the main resource for answering questions from new employees and guiding new employees to individuals and offices that can provide any needed assistance.
- C. **New Employees.** The new employees should actively participate in all aspects of their orientation. They should communicate their informational needs and actively seek additional information about their organization and appropriate procedures.
- D. **Orientation Manager.** Each regional office and the RSC will assign an orientation manager for their organization. Orientation managers will be involved in evaluating the effectiveness of the orientation program and ensuring that new employees have access to orientation programs and materials. Orientation managers will also help in the development of new tools like web based, computer based, and use of other automated tools to deliver orientation training.

4. Orientation Content.

- A. **Welcome and Introduction.** The welcome process should notify the employee(s) that they have been selected for a position with Reclamation. Before reporting to work, the new employee will be provided with information on the new employee orientation program and the name and telephone number of their sponsor. The new employee should also be provided information on hours of work, location of offices, key contacts within the office, and a copy the Employee Survival Kit (appendix A).
- B. **Basic Operations (Learning the Ropes).** Upon reporting to work, new employees should be furnished with information that provides a basic understanding concerning their duties, responsibilities, performance expectations, rights, and benefits. The employee should feel at home and efforts should be made to reduce any anxieties. See appendices B, C, D, and E for sample checklists for new employees, sponsors,

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supervisors, and personnel specialists. These checklists may be modified to accommodate local requirements and procedures. The new employee will be provided with a New Employee Orientation Notebook which contains personnel and other policy information.

- C. **Work Environment.** The new employee should receive as much information on the office work environment as possible, especially safety and security procedures. Supervisors, managers, and sponsors should ensure that appropriate employee briefings are scheduled and completed.
- D. **Mission, Structure, and Values (The Big Picture).** A formal orientation program must be developed to present the Big Picture as it pertains to Reclamation, the Department of the Interior, and the Federal Government. The orientation program must be a minimum of 4 hours and include the mission, structure, and values of the organization including Reclamation, the Department of Interior, and the Federal Government. The formal orientation may be supplemented with guided on- and off-site tours, videos, information on the intranet/internet, employee handbooks, historical briefings, presentations by program specialists, and other appropriate information. (See appendix F for a sample outline of new employee orientation training agenda.)
- E. **Local Unions.** New employees hired in bargaining units represented by local unions should, as part of their orientation, be informed of the local union's exclusive recognition. In addition, employees should be introduced to the cognizant steward or other representative designated by the local union. Adequate time should be allowed for a private briefing by the union representative of the new employees on the contractual relationship between the local union and the employer.